

# GRATIAS IS STILL CHAMPION

HE RETAINS HIS TITLE IN A MATCH WITH NELS HALVORSON, WHO SOUGHT TO WREST IT FROM HIM. THE MATCH WAS A GOOD EXHIBITION OF STRENGTH AND STRATEGY—BOTH MEN VERY MUSCULAR. GRATIAS WAS THE AGGRESSOR. NORSVING GETS DECISION IN PRELIMINARY

The wrestling match between R. H. Gratias, the champion heavy-weight wrestler of North Dakota, and Nels Halvorson, who challenged the champion some time ago, was pulled off at the opera house here early Saturday morning, the train which was to have brought Gratias here on the day before failing to arrive here until after midnight. The crowd of interested spectators who had gathered to witness the contest, remained and anxiously awaited the big event.

Strange to say, that with the admission of the two very little money was staked on the outcome, the most of it, and very little at that, being wagered on "falls" and as to which of the men would have the greater number to his credit at the conclusion of the contest. Some even went so far as to bet that Halvorson would not get a fall, so great was their confidence in the skill and strength of the champion, but, Halvorson had his friends also, and none of these bets were offered without being accepted by some one, and the Binford man's friends won all that was staked on that score, for he did get a fall and a good hard one at that.

After all arrangements had been made satisfactory to both men, the curtain was raised and Referee, F. G. Lewis addressed the audience in a

falling deprived the champion of speedy honors by turning half over and landing on his elbows and knees instead of his two shoulders which would have constituted a fall if Gratias had succeeded in pinning him there. Upon all fours, the Binford man gave the champion a chance to exert himself to his own satisfaction for some time, and, since he was partly down all that remained for him to do was to protect himself and let the Fargo man resume his aggressiveness. After several minutes struggle the champion secured a hammer-lock and toe hold combined and after some strenuous work on the part of both men Halvorson found that he was powerless to break the hold and gave up in order to save his arm. The first fall was given to Gratias in 10 min. and 30 sec. Both men returned to their corners and prepared for rest, Gratias returning to the mat and lying upon it while Halvorson sat upright in his corner with his seconds.

When time was called for the second round both men came up quickly although they were a little more cautious than in the first round. In a struggle for holds Halvorson received a jolt on the nose which drew blood and the men separated while Halvorson's seconds hastened to his aid. The bleeding stopped and the round was continued but in the course of a

chances of his getting a fall. At the call of "time" by the referee both men were up on time and as eager as tigers to get hold of each other. This round was to decide who was to get the money and whether the championship was to be retained by the Fargo man or wrested from him by the Binford giant. As the men walked round each other seeking the advantage one over the other, which lasted painfully long, the crowd had hard work to retain their seats so intensely interested was every man in the final outcome. Great was the excitement when the two giants finally latched each other and began struggling for supremacy. In this round Halvorson appeared to be continually on the defensive, leaving the Fargo man to decide for himself as to the best manner in which to end this excellent exhibition. Gratias pranced around his man with the slyness of a cat while Halvorson very cleverly met him at all corners and guarded against his strategic movements until finally as is found to happen in all things one gets the advantage of the other, and so it was in this case, Gratias secured a forward half-Nelson and waist hold and ended the contest by bearing his strong antagonist to the mat both points down and he was given the third fall, the time being 3 min. and 30 sec.

This match had long been advertised and anxiously awaited by the sporting public and a lively interest was manifested in it from the start. The men are both known to be good athletic fellows, strong and of great endurance, and so they both proved to be when on the mat. Both had their admirers and at the conclusion of the contest many flocked around them to congratulate them, Gratias for his success and Halvorson for putting up such a good exhibition. Gratias had the advantage over Halvorson in the matter of training, he having had the benefit of professional instruction very recent which, added to the fact that he had been engaged in some notable exhibitions and matches worthy of recognition, better fitted him for this match than was his opponent who has had very little training of late if any at all until arrangements were completed for the match, when it is said he has taken some special exercises and done some preparatory work. However, it is said by many that he was handicapped to some degree by lack of proper training. At any rate the men were quite equally matched and there seems to be very little difference between them except as to build. Halvorson of heavy and well developed chest and shoulders while Gratias has powers of exceptional importance in the body and limbs. Everyone was well satisfied with the match and the referee gave the best of satisfaction in his decisions.

This, Rindahl and Knut Norsving acted as Halvorson's seconds, and Ot to Gratias and August Rickford as Gratias's.

It is reported that Halvorson will arrange for another match with Gratias during the winter but there is no certainty of it as yet. If the men come together again, however, a better contest may be expected, if such can be had, and the interest will run high.

## THE PRELIMINARY

Returning now to the preliminary match between Knut Norsving and Charley Johnson, it being of secondary importance as compared with the other match, although it was pulled off in advance, it can be said that it was surprisingly good from every point of view. The crowd getting tired of waiting for the arrival of the train (which is naturally always the case) Manager Nelson let the crowd decide as to whether the preliminary should come on before the arrival of the train or after. The crowd being anxious to see the show began to decide to let the preliminary take place at once. William Rickford opened the entertainment with a few selections on the piano, time was called and the two men jumped to the mat with the dexterity of kittens. Norsving had the best of his opponent, and as he looked so monstrous as compared with his antagonist, it looked very much as though Johnson sized him up in the same manner and decided to let the big duffer do the heavy work and he would do the rest. At the same time Johnson did not resemble anything like a pygmy as he waited around on the mat and sized up his man, but he let Norsving decide as to what kind of a hold would best suit his objectives and that stalwart did not and brought his man down upon the mat. It might be added right here that neither of them had

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R. H. GRATIAS, THE CHAMPION.

way of apprising them of the terms and conditions of the match. The men were dressed for the contest by this time, and, the referee turning to ascertain that all was in readiness and finding that the men were anxiously awaiting the call of "time," Mr. Lewis announced that all was ready and "time" was called. As if inspired by some extraordinary force, both men sprang nimbly to the mat with outstretched hands, and immediately began to watch for openings, but each guarded himself well and it was not until some lively work had been executed that Gratias succeeded in securing a straight arm hold through his opponent over his shoulder. This was a beautiful feature and was very readily done, but Halvorson had evidently been on the mat before and in few seconds the straining of the body

brought on another bleeding from Halvorson's nose and another delay was caused for further treatment. This over for the second time, the men fought busily again and Halvorson secured a waist hold and bore his antagonist heavily to the floor and held him there securely. The referee announced that the second fall was given to Halvorson, the time being 4 min. At this announcement the audience lost all self control and a wild cheer went up for the Binford man, and loud was the applause, which indicated that Halvorson was the favorite with the majority of those present. This, however, was likely due to the fact that Halvorson is a local man and much of the crowd was naturally loyal to his cause, while a great deal of the cheering was done by those who had staked their money on the

trained down to living skeletons, not considering it advisable for a side bet of only \$5.00, so there they rolled and struggled with all the avtoruptus (especially Norsving) that would ordinarily be required to fill to overflowing a suit of clothes belt for a very portly trust magnate. Norsving lay upon Johnson with a look of repose upon his beaming face that foretold utter confidence and looked around and shed a winsome smile upon the audience, allowing all the while like a rotary snow-plow going through an eight foot drift. Finally, Norsving secured a strangle hold on his opponent and it was thought the round would end shortly, but taking everything into consideration the big man released that hold because as he said afterward, it was not fair in such a match as that one. Later he succeeded in getting a hammer-lock and turned his man over and down, the decision being given to Norsving, the time being 13 minutes.

The second round did not last so long, there being more rapid work on the part of both men. Norsving assuming the aggressive all the way through the same as in the first round. After considerable skillful work on the part of Norsving to secure advantage of his adversary and on the part

of Johnson in foiling his attempts for some time, Norsving by a clever dodge executed a full Nelson on his man and floored him for the second time. Time 3 minutes.

Considering the amount of the prize for this contest and the fact that the participants were amateurs, the match was very interesting, and some unexpected stunts were rendered by both. Johnson surprised most of the spectators by proving so much harder an antagonist than had been expected, that he was given a great deal more credit than the loser of a wrestling match usually gets. F. G. Lewis was referee for this match and gave good satisfaction to both the wrestlers and audience.

Season for It.

A vinegar-faced old woman, traveling on top of an L. C. C. car, remarked to the big Irishman who was distributing his tobacco smoke among the outside passengers, "He listened, without making retort, till the woman, losing her patience, exclaimed: "You old brute, if you were my husband I'd give you poison!" Giving a complacent puff to his pipe, she looked at her steadily, and replied: "Blessin, if I was your husband I'd take it!" —PUNCH.